

was going to see his family again. By 11 a.m., he was dealing with a new reality, one in which he was saying goodbye to more than 2,000 of his brothers. Within 24 hours, he was a soldier for a nation at war with Japan, within 48 hours, that war had grown.

We as a nation oftentimes take the sacrifice Merle and his fellow servicemembers have made for granted. They sacrificed their time, their personal health, and far too often their lives to let us as a nation live free and prosper. Without their sacrifices we would be living in a very different world today and no amount of gratitude can ever be enough. But we must try, and we must, most importantly, remember.

I am proud to say that, at last count, 60 of these heroes who experienced the horror of Pearl Harbor call Indiana home. But, as with all World War II veterans, this proud generation is shrinking. Just last year, six Pearl Harbor veterans passed away in our State. According to the Pearl Harbor Survivors, only 25 of them are able to be active members of their community. The rapid decline and increasing immobility of this generation poses many dangers to the memory of Pearl Harbor.

Today, we remember their sacrifice, we discuss the events of the day, the lessons of history are reviewed, we collectively remember, and, if you know a veteran of Pearl Harbor, we should slow down and listen before the opportunity passes.

Since 2002, I have been leading the effort in Indiana to record oral history interviews with Pearl Harbor survivors and all veterans as part of the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. In addition to the stories of 104 Hoosier Pearl Harbor survivors already archived at the Library of Congress, I have submitted the histories of over 10,000 veterans for permanent inclusion in our national history. As a veteran of the U.S. Navy, I know the memories and life changing experiences gained from serving our country, and I am pleased to help ensure that Hoosier veterans are able to record their personal stories so that we can all learn about and appreciate their tremendous sacrifice.

One of the most important lessons of Pearl Harbor was that the adversaries of the United States are multiple and active. We learned that we must always be prepared. On September 11, 2001, we were painfully reminded of these lessons.

As we recognize these historical events, I call attention to the 97,800 military personnel who today are on the ground in Afghanistan, with a total of 129,200 deployed to the region aboard ships at sea, on bases, and at air stations in the region supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. We are down now to only about 12,500 military personnel deployed to Iraq, yet some 79,105 are still deployed to the region aboard ships at sea, on bases, and at air stations in support of the redeployment of that

force. Since 2003, 4,474 have been killed in Iraq operations, and 1,733 have been killed in Afghanistan since 2001.

These men and women continue to answer the call to serve a cause greater than themselves, as those men did that fateful day in Pearl Harbor 70 years ago. I ask my colleagues to join me in humbly honoring Private First Class Berdine and all those who have and continue to serve our Nation in uniform for their inspirational service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE MISSION CONTINUES

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, on Veterans Day, November 11, 2011, I was fortunate enough to attend a service project at Walnut Grove Elementary School in St. Louis, MO, alongside nearly 100 veteran and civilian volunteers. These volunteers recognized that Veterans Day is not just an opportunity to thank veterans but also an opportunity to recognize them as the civic assets they are and to demonstrate that their skills and leadership are very much needed in our communities. This group spent nearly 7 hours working on a wide variety of academic and artistic projects that will improve the learning environment at Walnut Grove Elementary.

This experience was only possible through a Missouri organization called The Mission Continues, headquartered in St. Louis. Founded in 2007 after CEO Eric Greitens returned home from service in Iraq as a Navy SEAL, The Mission Continues is the only national nonprofit dedicated to empowering post-9/11 veterans to rebuild purpose through community service. They have recognized that many veterans struggle to find purpose at home without the structure, mission, and camaraderie of a military unit. The Mission Continues challenges our veterans to apply their military skill sets to address critical needs within our communities by serving as citizen leaders. This unique approach gives veterans renewed purpose and strengthens our communities for future generations.

The Mission Continues engages post-9/11 veterans to serve in their communities through 28-week service fellowships at nonprofit organizations. This fellowship program provides our former military men and women with the opportunity to translate their military experience into civilian skills. To date, The Mission Continues has awarded nearly 200 successful fellowships in 30 States and the District of Columbia. Additionally, the organization recognizes our veterans as civic assets and brings veterans and civilians together to serve their country by leading in their local communities.

We must remind ourselves that while our veterans are often told "thank you," they also need to hear, "we still need you." Through their work, The

Mission Continues is fundamentally changing the way our Nation welcomes home our servicemembers. In addition to the fellowship program, they are contributing to comprehensive academic research, have established innovative partnerships between public and private organizations that support our veterans in their transition, and provide an experienced voice as the Nation tackles veterans' issues.

I encourage my colleagues in the Senate to recognize the work that The Mission Continues performs every day. As a nation, we are all invested in the post-military careers of the men and women in uniform who have defended our country. I encourage all Members to stand with The Mission Continues as they challenge our veterans to be citizen leaders in their communities.●

CELEBRATING THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF DR. HAL COHEN

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I rise to celebrate the distinguished career of Dr. Hal Cohen, an internationally renowned economist and professor, devoted husband, father, and grandfather, and my good friend.

Harold Allen Cohen was born in New York on April 21, 1938. After earning his B.A. from the college that is now known as SUNY-Binghamton and his M.A. from Cornell University, Hal began his career in health care financing and public policy by earning a Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1967. After completing his education, he was awarded a prestigious fellowship with the National Science Foundation from 1969 to 1971, which he followed with a year-long stint as an associate at the Danforth Foundation while teaching economics at the University of Georgia, first as an assistant and then as an associate professor.

Hal then took a position that would come to define his career. In 1972, he moved to Baltimore to become the executive director and founding member of the Health Services Cost Review Commission, or HSCRC, the State agency that regulates hospital rates in Maryland. As a member of the Maryland House of Delegates, I worked closely with Dr. Cohen during the formative years of the HSCRC, and while he is quick to say that he was surrounded by a tremendous group of colleagues, it was his leadership that cemented the HSCRC as a Maryland institution. His insight was and continues to be invaluable in containing hospital cost growth. Dr. Cohen worked to ensure that hospitals could provide efficient, high quality care to every Marylander as he focused on ensuring that hospital financing options were fair, accessible and equitable. Since 1976, the HSCRC has financed nearly \$1 billion in uncompensated care, improving access for underinsured and uninsured Marylanders, and supporting hospitals' social mission while providing them greater financial stability.